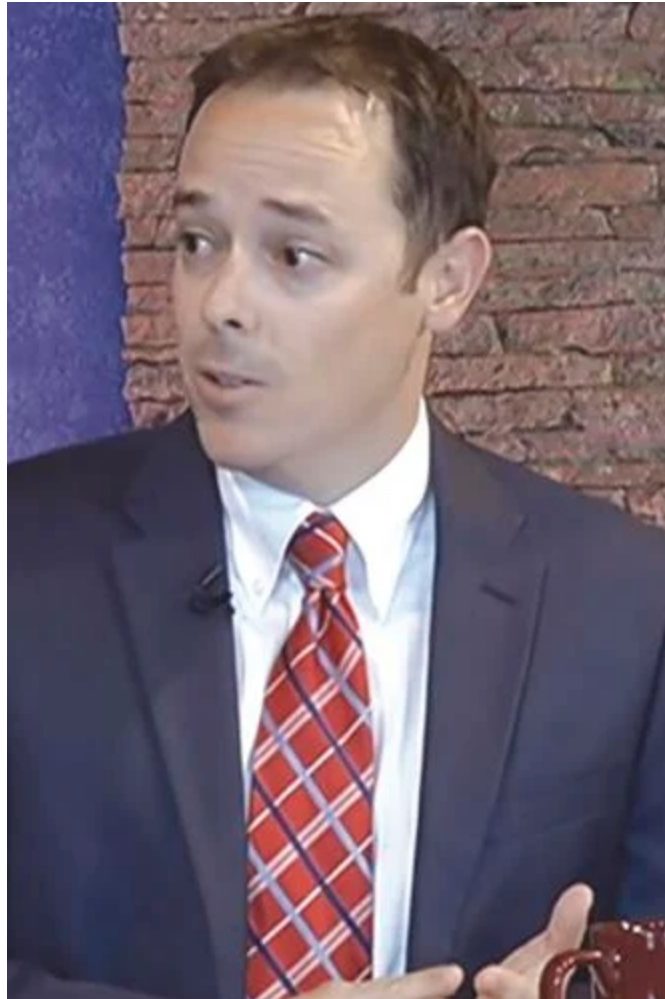


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Chandler strengthening innovation image

By The City of Chandler
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Micah Miranda, Chandler's economic development director, said, "When I first started in economic development, business recruitment was largely driven by financial incentives. But today, it's about access to well-trained, highly educated local talent."

(File photo)

The City of Chandler continues to strengthen its reputation as a leading technology hub and a community driven by innovation.

This distinction hasn't come by chance, but through a strategic framework and focused goals set in motion by the City Council in recent years.

A key priority has been ensuring residents have access to the educational resources they need to succeed in a rapidly evolving workforce.

City leaders, in conversation with local businesses, recognized the growing demand for workers with specialized skills, especially in high-value industries like semiconductors, where a shortage of qualified professionals poses a challenge.

"We live in a world where talent is increasingly at a premium," says Micah Miranda, Chandler's economic development director. "When I first started in economic development, business recruitment was largely driven by financial incentives.

"But today, it's about access to well-trained, highly educated local talent."

One of Chandler's key strengths in attracting and retaining companies is the educational excellence provided by its schools, colleges, and universities.

"Chandler has long been a magnet for high-growth, high-velocity industries that require specialized talent," Miranda notes.

"A major reason is the success of our students in the K-20 educational pipeline. Businesses know they can tap into a steady flow of skilled workers right here in our community."

While partnerships with higher education institutions are not new to Chandler, they've become more targeted and collaborative in recent years.

The city's economic development team has worked to connect local business leaders with higher education providers, identifying mutually beneficial opportunities.

This collaboration has led to the development of cutting-edge programs designed to meet the needs of local industries.

Key partners in this initiative include the University of Arizona, Arizona State University, Grand Canyon University, Chandler–Gilbert Community College, Chandler Chamber of Commerce and Chandler Unified School District.

A cornerstone of this effort is the presence of both ASU and UArizona in downtown Chandler. The two universities are expanding their degree offerings, including a master of business administration in data analytics from UArizona and a master’s program in public management at ASU’s Chandler Innovation Center.

“Having the state’s two largest universities in our downtown was a crucial goal,” Miranda says. “Not only does it expand our educational offerings, but it also creates vibrant spaces where people can engage and learn through social interaction.”

Grand Canyon University recently launched its advanced bachelor of science in nursing program in West Chandler, addressing the critical demand for nursing professionals in the region’s healthcare industry.

Chandler’s collaborations extend beyond traditional degree programs. Chandler–Gilbert Community College and CUSD are offering Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs that equip students with foundational knowledge in industry sectors such as culinary arts, graphic design, and advanced manufacturing.

“CUSD is excelling in providing diverse educational options and career pathways beyond the typical four-year degree,” says Miranda. “These programs allow students to earn certifications in high school, preparing them for impactful roles in the workforce.”

Additionally, CUSD, CGCC, and U of A have partnered to create a pathway that allows students to progress from high school to a master’s degree in cybersecurity, all within the Chandler community.

This focus on workforce development also benefits Chandler’s internal operations.

The city and CGCC share a staff member dedicated to placing interns in municipal departments, particularly in technical fields like wastewater management and traffic engineering.

“These students get hands-on experience while earning a paycheck, and their contributions provide valuable services to the city,” Miranda adds.

A key initiative spearheaded by the city is the Chandler Career Center, an online job board (ChandlerCareerCenter.com) launched by the Economic Development team to connect Chandler residents with local employers and workforce development opportunities.

The platform features job openings in sectors such as Information technology and software, high tech manufacturing and development, healthcare and bioscience, and aviation and aerospace.

With educational programs aligned to industry needs and a highly trained local workforce, Chandler is poised for continued economic growth while offering its residents pathways to thrive in high-demand careers.

As the city looks to the future, its strategic focus on higher education and business collaboration will remain key to maintaining its vibrant economic environment.

Through partnerships with universities, colleges, local schools, and the business community, Chandler is not only ensuring the success of its current workforce but also preparing for the challenges of tomorrow.

Looking ahead, the city’s strategy to focus on higher education and business collaboration will remain vital to maintaining a vibrant and diverse economy.

Through partnerships with universities, colleges, schools and local businesses, Chandler is not only ensuring the success of its current workforce but also preparing for the challenges of the future.

For more information about the City of Chandler Workforce Development & Talent Pipeline Strategy, visit chandleraz.gov/WorkforceDevelopment.